

Message Text

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SUBJ: EEC-PRC TRADE SYMPOSIUM IN GENOA

1. AN INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON TRADE PROMOTION BETWEEN THE EEC AND THE PRC, HELD IN GENOA ON SEPTEMBER 20, RESULTED MORE IN HIGHLIGHTING THE BARRIERS TO SUCH TRADE THAN IN PRODUCING CONCRETE RESULTS. THE EVENT, SPONSORED BY THE ITALO-CHINESE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, TOOK PLACE IN CONNECTION WITH THE SHIP-BUILDING AND MARINE SERVICES TRADE FAIR, TECNOMAR '77. THE ABSENCE OF SUCH SCHEDULED SPEAKERS AS LORENZO NATALI, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE EEC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, VITTORINO COLOMBO, ITALIAN MINISTER OF POSTS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND PRESIDENT OF THE ITALO-CHINESE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, AND DR. RINALDO OSSOLA, MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE, DEPRIVED THE CONFERENCE OF HIGH LEVEL PARTICIPATION. LEFT WAS A CONFERENCE CONSISTING OF A SERIES OF EXTEMPERANEOUS REMARKS BY REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE ACADEMIC AND BUSINESS COMMUNITIES ON THE PRC'S INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND IMPORT REQUIREMENTS.

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PAGE 02 GENOA 00500 271900Z

2. CHAO CHEN, THE PRC COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR IN ROME, WAS THE ONLY CHINESE OFFICIAL PRESENT. HE LIMITED HIS PARTICIPATION TO A BRIEF SPEECH AFFIRMING THE PRC'S INTEREST IN ESTABLISHING CLOSER CULTURAL, ECONOMIC, AND TECHNICAL TIES WITH THE EEC AND EXTOLLING EEC UNITY AS A "GUARANTEE AGAINST THE HEGEMONY OF THE SUPERPOWERS." CHAO CHEN NOTED THAT NEW COMMERCIAL

OPPORTUNITIES FOR EEC EXPORTERS WOULD ARISE FROM CHINA'S
AMBITIOUS PLANS TO INDUSTRIALIZE ITS ECONOMY BY THE
YEAR 2000 (SIC).

3. THE PRESENTATIONS OF THE ACADEMIC AND BUSINESS PARTICIPANTS
FOCUSSED PRIMARILY ON THE PROBLEMS OF ESTABLISHING TRADE
RELATIONS WITH THE PRC. MOST ATTENDEES REPORTEDLY DEPARTED
THE CONFERENCE WITH THE VIEW THAT EVENTUAL GROWTH IN THE
CHINESE MARKET WILL BE A SLOW PROCESS AND LINKED CLOSELY TO
CHINA S DEVELOPMENT OF HER PETROLEUM RESOURCES. THE PARTICIPANTS
ALSO CONCLUDED THAT ONLY LARGE FIRMS CAN COMPETE SUCCESSFULLY
AND MEET THE CHINESE REQUIREMENTS FOR EXPORT FINANCING AND
PREFERENCE FOR ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY. THIS ELIMINATES MOST OF THE
SMALL AND MEDIUM FIRMS THAT FORM THE BACKBONE OF THE ITALIAN
EXPORT ECONOMY.

COMMENT: THE CONFERENCE INTRODUCED MANY PARTICIPANTS TO THE
LIMITED POTENTIALS OF THE CHINESE MARKET. DESPITE THE WARMTH
OF THE TOASTS EXCHANGED ON ITALO-CHINESE RELATIONSHIP, NOTHING
OF SIGNIFICANCE IS LIKELY TO FLOW FROM THIS SEMINAR.

THE ORGANIZERS WERE UNDOUBTEDLY HOPING TO REGAIN LOST GROUND
IN THE ITALIAN TRADING POSITION WITH CHINA. IN 1971, ITALY
RANKED FOURTH AMONG THE PRC S TRADING PARTNERS. LAST YEAR,
ITALY SUFFERED A DEFICIT OF DLRS 11 MILLION IN TRADE WITH THE
PRC AND SAW THE EXPORT SALES OF ITS EEC PARTNERS, FRANCE AND
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PAGE 03 GENOA 00500 271900Z

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